

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for dispensing flat items comprising:
  - a housing having a front wall with an upper door opening, at least one intermediate
  - 5                   dispensing slot and a lower pan opening formed therein;
  - a collection pan releasably retained in said pan opening and extending inside said
  - housing;
  - a pan bag removably retained in said collection pan for receiving coins;
  - a door positioned in said door opening and pivotally attached to said front wall for
  - 10               movement between open and closed positions;
  - at least one coin slide mechanism mounted on said door and operable to transfer at
  - least one coin from outside said housing to said pan bag;
  - a storage means removably mounted on an inside surface of said door for holding a
  - plurality of flat items in a column; and
  - 15           a folder slide mounted on an inside surface of said door adjacent said storage means
  - and coupled to said coin slide mechanism whereby when said storage means
  - holds at least one flat item and said coin slide mechanism is operated to
  - transfer the at least one coin from outside said housing to said pan bag, said
  - coin slide mechanism actuates said folder slide to push the at least one flat
  - 20           item at least partially out of said at least one dispensing slot.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said collection pan has at least one
- of a tab adapted to extend through a slot formed in a rear wall of said housing for receiving
- a padlock and a lock cooperating with said housing.
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3. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said pan bag includes a pan shaped
- bag having a bottom wall with a bag opening formed therein and a pocket shaped bag
- attached to said bottom wall in communication with said bag opening.
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4. The apparatus according to claim 3 wherein said pan bag includes a cord having
- opposite ends attached to opposed side walls of said pan shaped bag.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said storage means is one of a tower and a shipping/dispensing box.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1 including a weight having a metal plate and  
5 attached handle, said weight being removably retained in said storage means for resting on top of the column of flat items.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said storage means is a shipping/dispensing box having a predetermined number of the flat items stored therein.

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8. The apparatus according to claim 1 including a display attached to a front wall of said storage means.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said shipping/dispensing box has  
15 an indicator means for indicating at least one of a number of the flat items in said box and a number of the flat items dispensed from said box.

10. The apparatus according to claim 1 including a security gate mounted inside said housing adjacent said dispensing slot, said security gate being one of a vertically  
20 extending bias plate attached to said folder slide and a horizontally extending spring attached to said door.

11. An apparatus for dispensing flat items comprising:

a housing having a front wall with at least one dispensing slot formed therein;

a storage means removably mounted inside said housing for supporting a plurality  
of flat items in a column, said storage means having a bottom wall with an  
opening formed therein; and

a folder slide mounted on an inside surface of said housing front wall adjacent said  
storage means, said folder slide having at least one flange extending into  
said opening and at least one post extending into said opening whereby  
when said storage means holds at least one flat item, said at least one item is  
supported by said at least one flange and said at least one post out of contact  
with said storage means bottom wall.

12. The apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said storage means includes a  
retaining means for securing a column of the flat items from movement in the storage  
means.

13. The apparatus according to claim 12 wherein said storage means has opposed  
side walls and said retaining means is one of a plurality of tabs formed in said side walls,  
each said tab being adapted to be pushed inwardly, and a plurality of flexible teeth  
extending inwardly from said side walls.

14. The apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said storage means has an  
indicator means adjacent for indicating at least one of a number of the flat items in said  
storage means and a number of the flat items dispensed from said storage means.

15. The apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said storage means is one of a  
tower and a shipping/dispensing box.

16. The apparatus according to claim 15 wherein said shipping/dispensing box has  
a top wall rear portion adapted to be folded into an upper end of said box and having a tab  
lock adapted to be inserted behind a rear edge of the topmost flat items to hold the column  
in place.

17. The apparatus according to claim 15 wherein said folder slide includes means for releasably retaining said tower and said shipping/dispensing box, said means for releasably retaining being movable between a first position over a portion of said bottom wall of said storage means and a second position in said opening in said bottom wall of said  
5 storage means.

18. The apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said storage means has a front wall adapted to receive a display.

10 19. The apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said front wall has at least one display window formed therein, said at least one display window being aligned with said front wall of said storage means for viewing a display received on said front wall.

20. The apparatus according to claim 19 including a transparent plate mounted  
15 inside said housing closing said at least one display window.

21. A shipping/storage box for use in an apparatus for dispensing flat items comprising:

20 a box sized to hold a plurality of flat items stacked in a column, said box having a front wall, rear wall, a pair of opposed side walls, a bottom wall and a movable top wall;

said front wall being adapted to retain a display depicting the flat items held in the box;

25 said rear wall having an indicator means for indicating at least one of a number of the flat items in said box and a number of the flat items dispensed from said box;

said side walls having a retaining means for securing the column of the flat items from movement in the box; and

said bottom wall having a cutout and at least one aperture formed therein.

30 22. The shipping/storage box according to claim 21 wherein said rear wall has a vertically extending opening formed therein adjacent said indicator means

23. The shipping storage box according to claim 21 wherein said retaining means is one of a plurality of tabs formed in said side walls, each said tab being adapted to be pushed inwardly, and a plurality of flexible teeth extending inwardly from said side walls.